

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /069 W

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R 061050Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9794

INFO AMEMBASSY BISSAU

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 2025

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, TP

SUBJECT: GSTP RESHUFFLE RAISES NEW POLITICAL QUESTIONS

REF: LIBREVILLE 1818

SUMMARY: MINOR GSTP RESHUFFLE CREATES TWO CLEAR POWER CENTERS WITHIN GSTP, LEAVING PRESIDENT IN POSITION OF ARBITER BUT SOWING SEEDS OF POTENTIAL FUTURE CONFLICT. USAID PROGRAM COMES AT PARTICULARLY OPPORTUNE MOMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. GSTP LAST WEEK ANNOUNCED SERIES OF CHANGES IN COMPOSITION OF CABINET (DETAILS BY AIRGRAM) WHICH CONFIRM AUTHORITY OF PRIME MINISTER TROVOADA OVER MOST SECTORS OF GOVERNMENT, BUT FOR FIRST TIME MAKE EXPLICIT THAT DEFENSE AND INTERNAL SECURITY ARE INDEPENDENT OF HIS CONTROL.

2. FORMER MINISTER OF INTERIOR DANIEL DAIO RETAINS HIS CONTROL OVER POLICE AND ADDS NATIONAL DEFENSE
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TO HIS RESPONSIBILITIES, THUS BRINGING ALL ORGANIZED SECURITY FORCES UNDER SINGLE HEAD. SINCE DAIO CONSIDERED MOST XENOPHOBIC AND ANTI WESTERN MEMBER OF GSTP, CONCENTRATION OF POWER IN HIS HANDS SETS STAGE FOR POTENTIAL FUTURE CLASH BETWEEN HIM AND RELATIVELY MODERATE TROVOADA.

3. STRENGTHENING OF DAIO'S POSITION UNDERLINED BY DEPARTURE FROM CABINET OF MINISTER OF JUSTICE JOSE FRET LAU CHONG, ONE OF MOST MODERATE MEMBERS OF GSTP. CHONG WAS POLITICAL ALLY OF FORMER HEALTH MINISTER CARLOS DA GRACA, WHO QUIT GOVERNMENT IN JANUARY BECAUSE HE FELT HIS VIEWS WERE NOT BEING HEEDED.

4. FOUR NEW ADDITIONS TO GOVERNMENT ARE ESSENTIALLY TECHNICIANS WHO APPEAR RELATIVELY WELL QUALIFIED FOR THEIR JOBS. ONLY OTHER DEPARTURE IS FORMER SECSTATE FOR AGRICULTURE, WHO REPORTEDLY HAD AMPLY DEMONSTRATED HIS INCOMPETENCE.

5. COMMENT: TROVOADA AND DAIO REPRESENT TWO ELEMENTS WITHIN GSTP WHICH HAVE BEEN COMPETING FOR POWER AND INFLUENCE SINCE BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. FORMER CURRENT, MORE OR LESS HEADED BY TROVOADA, SEEKS TO TEMPER BASICALLY SOCIALIST OPTION OF GSTP BY MAINTAINING LINKS TO WEST; LATTER, XENOPHOBIC AND VISCERALLY ANTI-WESTERN SEEMINGLY WISHES TO SEVER REMAINING TIES TO WESTERN WORLD. BY TEMPERAMENT MOST SAO TOMEANS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY PREFER MORE PRAGMATIC APPROACH ADVOCATED BY PRIME MINISTER, BUT INFLUENCE OF DAIO HAS CLEARLY BEEN RISING WITHIN GSTP. DEPARTURE FROM GOVERNMENT OF DA GRACA
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AND CHONG, TWO OF MOST MODERATE MEMBERS, AND NOTABLE INCREASE IN "ANTI IMPERIALIST" SLOGANEERING (SEE REFTEL) WERE PRELUDE TO CURRENT CONCENTRATION IN DAIO'S HANDS OF CONTROL OVER ALL SECURITY FORCES.

6. FUTURE COURSE OF EVENTS NOW MORE THAN EVER IN HANDS OF PRESIDENT DA COSTA, WHOSE POSITION AS ULTIMATE ARBITER BETWEEN CONTENDING FACTIONS REMAINS INTACT BUT PERHAPS MORE FRAGILE THAN BEFORE IN FACE OF INCREASED POWER NOW HELD BY DAIO. DA COSTA APPEARS PERSONALLY TO BE MORE IN SYMPATHY WITH VIEWS OF PRAGMATISTS THAN WITH HARD LINE ADVOCATED BY DAIO, BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO DATE THAT PRESIDENT HAS ANY DESIRE TO ABANDON HIS LONG STANDING POSITION AS RELATIVELY NEUTRAL ARBITER IN ORDER TO JOIN THE FRAY.

7. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, US AID PROGRAM COMES AT OPPORTUNE MOMENT AS DEMONSTRATION OF CONTINUING WESTERN INTEREST IN FUTURE OF SAO TOME. LOW KEY ASSISTANCE FOR AGRICULTURAL SECTOR, WITH MINIMAL

AMERICAN PRESENCE, LOOKS FROM HERE LIKE IDEAL
PROGRAM FOR TESTING WATERS AND FOR LENDING
INCIDENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT TO THOSE WHO WANT TO
KEEPS DOORS OPEN TO WESTERN WORLD. STEIGMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Retention: 0
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1689924
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GSTP RESHUFFLE RAISES NEW POLITICAL QUESTIONS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, TP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3d4de360-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009